

Message Text

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UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 NICE 102

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SUBJECT : UPDATING OF MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS PROSPECTS IN THE
ALPES MARITIMES
REF : NICE 23 OF JAN 17, 1977

1. SUMMARY - AS THE PERIOD FOR ESTABLISHING MUNICIPAL LISTS
COMES TO A CLOSE, THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ALPES MARITIMES HOLDS
THE NATIONAL RECORD FOR DISHARMONY AMONG THE PARTIES OF THE
LEFT. AGREEMENTS FOR A COMMON PROGRAM BETWEEN THE SOCIALISTS
AND THE COMMUNISTS HAVE BEEN REACHED IN ONLY 19 OUT OF A
TOTAL OF 163 COMMUNITIES IN THIS DEPARTMENT. IN THE FIVE
CITIES OF MORE THAN 30,000 INHABITANTS, ONLY ONE COMMON
PROGRAM LIST HAS BEEN FORMED. THIS AGREEMENT WAS REACHED
IN ANTIBES, WHERE A COMMUNIST WILL HEAD THE LIST. SEPARATE
SOCIALIST LISTS HAVE BEEN FORMED IN LE CANNET, MENTON,
VALLAURIS, VENCE, ST. LAURENT DU VAR, AND MANDELIEU. THE
JOBERTISTS WANTED TO FORM LISTS IN BOTH GRASSE AND NICE
BUT WERE SUCCESSFUL ONLY IN NICE. END SUMMARY.

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2. ANTIBES - PIERRE MERLI, THE INCUMBENT MAYOR, OBTAINED
THE SUPPORT OF THE FOUR MAIN PARTIES OF THE MAJORITY.
MERLI S LIST INCLUDES MR J. XENARD, REPUBLICAIN INDEPENDANT,
OPPONENT TO MERLI IN THE CANTONAL ELECTIONS IN 1976. AN
ADDITIONAL LIST IS TO BE HEADED BY PAUL ANTIER, (NO POLITICAL
AFFILIATION), HONORARY DEPUTY AND FORMER MINISTER OF
AGRICULTURE AND THE NAVY. ANTIER IS KNOWN FOR HIS FORMER

OPPOSITION TO DE GAULLE'S ALGERIAN POLICY AND THUS SHOULD PROVE POPULAR AMONG THE "PIEDS NOIRS" VOTERS OF THE CITY. HIS CANDIDACY IS BACKED BY PIERRE DELMAS, FORMER MAYOR OF ANTIBES, AS WELL AS BY DR PAGLIUZZA, FIRST ASSISTANT TO MERLI. THE COMMON PROGRAM LIST IS HEADED BY ROGER TORDO, TECHNICAL AGENT OF THE EDF AND SECRETARY TO THE P.C. SECTION OF ANTIBES. THE LIST WILL INCLUDE 23 SEATS FOR THE P.C. AND 12 SEATS FOR THE P.S. FIRST ASSISTANT TO THE MAYOR, IF ELECTED, WILL BE ALSO A COMMUNIST, MR G. GENTE. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT THE LEFT HAS UNITED IN A SINGLE LIST IN ANTIBES.

3. CAGNES-SUR-MER - OF THE TWO ANNOUNCED LISTS IN CAGNES, ONE IS HEADED BY THE PRESENT INCUMBENT, PIERRE SAUVAIGO, MUNICIPAL COUNSELOR, REPRESENTING THE MAJORITY. SAUVAIGO, A DEPUTY AFFILIATED WITH THE RPR IN THE ASSEMBLY, HAS OBTAINED THE SUPPORT OF THE FOUR MAIN PARTIES OF THE MAJORITY IN ADDITION TO THE "SOCIALISTES DEMOCRATES" OF HINTERMANN. THE LIST OF THE COMMON PROGRAM IS HEADED BY CHARLES FREMAUX (P.S.) AND IS DIVIDED AS FOLLOWS : 11 SEATS FOR P.C. : 11 SEATS FOR P.S. : 3 SEATS FOR M.R. G.: 2 SEATS FOR THE P.S.U. THE CAGNES SUR MER BATTLE WILL BE ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING IN THE DEPARTMENT. SAUVAIGO WAS FIRST ELECTED MAYOR SIXTEEN YEARS AGO. IN THE 1976 CANTONAL ELECTIONS, THE LEFT WAS REPRESENTED BY MR FREMAUX. SAUVAIGO WON THE ELECTION BY ONLY 700 VOTES. SINCE THAT DATE, OVER 2,000 NEW VOTERS HAVE BEEN REGISTERED IN THE TOWN.

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4. CANNES - SINCE ANNOUNCING HIS CANDIDACY FOR RE-ELECTION (NICE 35 OF 1/24/77), BERNARD CORNUT-GENTILE HAS FOLLOWED HIS USUAL TACTIC - AND REMAINED SILENT. HE HAS GIVEN NO PUBLIC ADDRESSES NOR HAS HE ATTENDED ANY PUBLIC MEETINGS IN AN ATTEMPT TO GATHER VOTES. IN THE 1961 ELECTION, CORNUT-GENTILE BEAT THE P.C. AND MODERATE CANDIDATES IN THE FIRST ROUND WITH 70 PERCENT OF THE VOTE : IN 1965, AGAINST THE ONLY OPPONENT (P.C.), HE WON 84 PERCENT OF THE VOTE : IN THE 1971 ELECTION, HE CAME OUT AHEAD WITH 70 PERCENT OF THE VOTE AGAINST A P.C. AND GAULLIST CANDIDATE. CORNUT-GENTILE'S MAIN OPPONENT IN THIS ELECTION IS LUCIEN NEUWIRTH (DEPUTY-RPR) WHO HEADS A LIST NAMED CANNES AVENIR . IN ALL PUBLIC SPEECHES SINCE THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS CANDIDACY, NEUWIRTH HARPS ON THE FACT THAT, SINCE THE ELECTION OF GEORGES POMPIDOU, CORNUT-GENTILE HAS CONSISTENTLY VOTED WITH THE COMMUNISTS IN THE ASSEMBLY. HE CLAIMS THAT CORNUT-GENTILE IN REALITY HEADS A LIST OF THE UNION OF THE LEFT. NEUWIRTH, A MUNICIPAL COUNSELOR AND FIRST ASSISTANT TO THE MAYOR OF ST. ETIENNE FROM 1947 TO 1965, IS CONSIDERED THE STRONGEST

OPPONENT CORNUT-GENTILLE HAS EVER FACED IN CANNES. HE HAS MORE THAN ONCE MENTIONED THAT QUOTE ELECTED OR BEATEN, I SHALL STAY IN CANNES UNQUOTE. MOST TAKE THIS TO INDICATE THAT HE WILL BE A CONDIDATE FOR THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. THERE WILL BE NO COMMON PROGRAM CANDIDATE IN CANNES. ACCORDING TO P.S. FEDERAL SECRETARY, JEAN DE BENGY, CORNUT-GENTILLE'S RECORD BOTH IN THE TOWN HALL IN CANNES AS WELL AS AT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE SOCIALISTS. CORNUT-GENTILLE, IN KEEPING WITH HIS PERSONALITY AND INDEPENDENCE VIS-A-VIS POLITICAL PARTIES, WILL CERTAINLY NOT ADHERE TO THE COMMON PROGRAM. THE LEFT IN CANNES WILL THUS HAVE TWO CHOICES 1) ACTIVE SUPPORT OF CORNUT-GENTILLE OR 2) FRIENDLY NEUTRALITY.

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5. GRASSE - THE PRESENT MAYOR, HERVE DE FONTMICHEL (MAJORITY) HEADS A LIST CALLED "LISTE D'ADMINISTRATION ET D UNION MUNICIPALES" WHICH HAS THE SUPPORT OF THE FOUR MAJORITY PARTIES PLUS THAT OF THE "SOCIALISTES DEMOCRATES". HE IS OPPOSED BY GEORGES VASSALO, HEAD OF LOCAL P.C.F., WHO COMMANDS A LIST COMPOSED OF THE P.C. AND M.R.G. THE LEFT HAS BEEN UNABLE TO COME TO AN AGREEMENT ON A COMMON LIST BECAUSE THE P.S. REPRESENTED BY DR J. DEBERDT AND ROGER BELLEUDY, OBJECTED TO THE P.C. S DESIRED DIVISION OF THE MUNICIPAL SEATS. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT AN ACCORD WILL BE REACHED AT THE LAST MINUTE. TWO MODERATES, MICHEL JOBERT AND A LOCAL LAWYER, MR GARNERO, HAVE ATTEMPTED BUT FAILED

TO FORM LISTS. IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS OF 1974, MITTERRAND OBTAINED 46 PERCENT OF THE GRASSE VOTE AND, SINCE THAT TIME, 2,500 NEW VOTERS HAVE REGISTERED IN THE TOWN.

6. MENTON - FOUR LISTS HAVE BEEN FORMED IN MENTON. FRANCIS PALMERO (C.D.S.) SENATOR-MAYOR OF MENTON, WILL BE RUNNING AGAINST GENERAL EMMANUEL AUBERT, DEPUTY (RPR). ACCORDING TO THE LOCAL PRESS, BEFORE THESE TWO LISTS WERE UNCLASSIFIED

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ESTABLISHED BOTH MEN MET WITH JACQUES CHIRAC WHO MADE QUOTE A PROPOSAL UNQUOTE TO FRANCIS PALMERO WHICH HE DID NOT ACCEPT. IT IS GENERALLY FELT THAT PALMERO WILL HAVE A DIFFICULT TIME IN HIS RACE AGAINST AUBERT. PUBLIC OPINION HAS BEEN STRONGLY AGAINST CITY HALL IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS DUE TO THE DISASTROUS LANDSLIDES IN THE TOWN WHICH HAVE FORCED EVACUATION OF SEVERAL APARTMENT BUILDINGS. LOCAL AUTHORITIES NOW AGREE THAT THESE BUILDINGS SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN CONSTRUCTED IN THEIR PRESENT LOCATION BUT THE MAIN QUESTION REMAINS UNANSWERED - WHO AND WHY WERE THE BUILDING PERMITS AUTHORIZED BY CITY HALL ? PALMERO HAS NOT YET CLARIFIED THE SITUATION. THERE HAS BEEN NO AGREEMENT ON THE LEFT IN MENTON. THE SOCIALISTS WILL PRESENT A LIST HEADED BY ANTOINE OLIVESI, A LOCAL SCHOOL HEADMASTER WHILE A SEPARATE COMMUNIST LIST WILL BE HEADED BY DR M. MORBIDELLI.

7. NICE - JACQUES MEDECIN, THE PRESENT MAYOR, HEADS A LIST ENTITLED M.E.D.E.C.I.N. (MOUVEMENT POUR L EXPANSION ET LE DEVELOPPEMENT ECONOMIAUE DE LA CITE ET DES INTERETS DE NICE). THE LIST INCLUDES REPRESENTATIVES OF THE RPR, RI, CDS, RADICAL SOCIALISTS (JJSS) AND SOCIALISTES DEMOCRATES (HINTERMANN). NICE IS ONE OF THE 356 CITIES IN FRANCE HAVING NO DIFFICULTY IN FORMING A MAJORITY LIST. THE DISTRIBUTION IS AS FOLLOWS : 60 PERCENT OF LIST IS DIVIDED BETWEEN R.P. R. , R.I., C.D.S. (NINE SEATS FOR EACH PARTY) : THE REMAINING 40 PERCENT OF THE LIST IS DIVIDED EVENLY BETWEEN RADICAL SOCIALISTS AND SOCIALISTES DEMOCRATES, ON THE ONE HAND, AND THE REMAINDER INCLUDES LOCAL PERSONALITIES. A COMMON PROGRAM LIST HAS JUST BEEN FORMED, FOLLOWING A SOCIALIST CAVE-IN. ALL THREE SECTORS OF THE CITY WILL HAVE LISTS HEADED BY THE P.C. AND DISTRIBUTED AS FOLLOWS : 22 SEATS FOR THE P.C., 18 FOR THE P.S., 6 FOR GAULLISTS OF OPPOSITION AND THREE FOR THE M.R.G. AMONG THE GAULLISTS OF THE OPPOSITION IS GENERAL FRANCOIS BINOCHE, CO-PRESIDENT OF THE FRONT PROGRESSISTE AND JACQUES BOUNIN, EX-MUNICIPAL COUNSELOR OF NICE (SEE REFTTEL). A FOURTH LIST (JOBERTISTS) WILL BE LED BY HENRI ROUBAULT, UNCLASSIFIED

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REFORMATEUR CANDIDATE IN THE 1973 LEGISLATIVES. PREVAILING
OPINION IS THAT MEDECIN WILL HAVE NO DIFFICULTY IN
HIS BID FOR RE-ELECTION.

8. VALLAURIS - AS REPORTED REFTEL, THE P.S. AND P.C. WILL
EACH PRESENT SEPARATE LISTS. AT THE LAST MOMENT, THE
MAJORITY ANNOUNCED THAT NO LIST WILL BE PRESENTED BUT THAT
THEY WILL JOIN THE SOCIALIST LIST. THE SOCIALIST LIST,
HEADED BY PIERRE DONNET, WILL INCLUDE NINE SOCIALISTS
PLUS 18 MAJORITY CANDIDATES. THE SOCIALISTS HAVE DECLARED
WAR ON PAUL DERIGON, THE COMMUNIST MAYOR OF THE TOWN FOR
THE PAST THIRTY YEARS. VIRGILE PASQUETTI, FEDERAL SECRETARY
OF THE P.C.F., HAS LABELED THE SITUATION IN VALLAURIS AS
THE QUOTE SCANDAL UNQUOTE OF THE DEPARTMENT.

9. VILLEFRANCHE-SUR-MER - PRE-ELECTION ACTIVITY IN
VILLEFRANCHE HAS PRODUCED FOUR LISTS. THE INCUMBENT
MAYOR, COLONEL GILBERT BASTET, IN SPITE OF HIS CONSTANT
DENIAL OF THE FACT, ACTUALLY HEADS AN UNPROCLAIMED LIST
OF COMMUNIST PARTY. HIS LIST OF 23 CONTAINS 15 MEMBERS
OF THE P.C. IN ADDITION TO MODERATE ELEMENTS. THE
SOCIALISTS HAVE REFUSED TO PARTICIPATE IN BASTET S LIST.
HIS STRONGEST OPPOSITION COMES FROM JOSEPH CALDERONI (NO
POLITICAL AFFILIATION), A NATIVE VILLEFRANCHOIS WHO IS
POPULAR WITH THE YOUTH AND LOCAL RESIDENTS OF THIS SEASIDE
RESORT TOWN AND FORMER HOME OF THE VITH FLEET IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.
HIS LIST INCLUDES TWO OF BASTET S PRESENT MUNICIPAL
COUNSELLORS. A SECOND LIST OF THE MAJORITY WILL BE LED
BY GERARD GALBOIS, A 31 YEAR OLD LOCAL HOTEL OWNER WHILE
THE FOURTH LIST IS HEADED BY A 40-YEAR OLD FORMER SOUS-
PREFET, LUCIEN KALFON, WHO IS TOTALLY UNKNOWN IN THE TOWN.
IT IS GENERALLY AGREED THAT NEITHER OF THESE MEN HAVE A
CHANCE IN THE COMPETITION.

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